

STEERING COMMITTEE



GOAL

Steering Committees create a unique opportunity for a small group of stakeholders to gather together and provide vision into the decision-making process. They are a representative body for their community and offer a window into the needs and aspirations of their fellow neighbors. As a group, the Steering Committee assists the project team in developing relatable and relevant ways to exercise engagement, involve the broader community into the process, and champion a project's implementation.



OPPORTUNITIES

When a project team utilizes a Steering Committee that has broader and diverse representation, it can create a bridge for building trust with the community. As the Steering Committee gains trust through their collaboration with the project team and see the influence of their engagement on the project process and outcomes, that trust will then radiate out and encourage broader participation from the community.



LIMITATIONS

A Steering Committee is not a replacement for engaging the community at large. Although they represent diverse interests and should represent the community well in the make-up of the committee, they are not a holistic substitution. The community should still be given the opportunity to engage in the project process as well and have their voices heard directly.

INTENDED OUTCOME

- Empower a group of dedicated residents and stakeholders to guide the project process and its outcomes first hand
- Create project champions who help spread awareness of the project and invite their fellow residents and community members to participate
- Establish partners for project implementation
- Develop dedicated quality reviewers who can ensure community feedback is accurately reflected in the final project outcomes

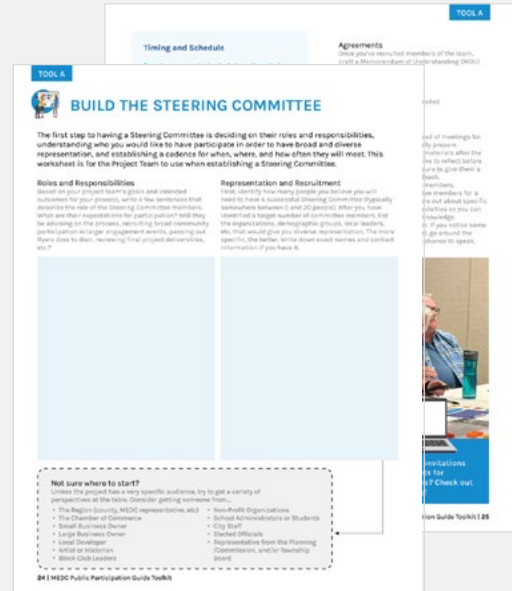
CLOSE BUT NOT QUITE?

- **Don't like the title?**
Try a Community Council, Advisory Group, or Co-Building Committee
- **Can't meet regularly enough for a steering committee?**
Try doing focus groups instead that target specific groups of people (business owners, students, seniors, developers, etc.) and meet with them once or twice during the process to talk about specific topics. While this would shift the engagement goal from Empower to Collaborate, it is still a valuable way to create project champions and empower specific community members to participate in project implementation.

Included in this Toolkit:

BUILD THE STEERING COMMITTEE WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to help you identify who should participate in your Steering Committee, what their roles and responsibilities will be, and how often they will meet.



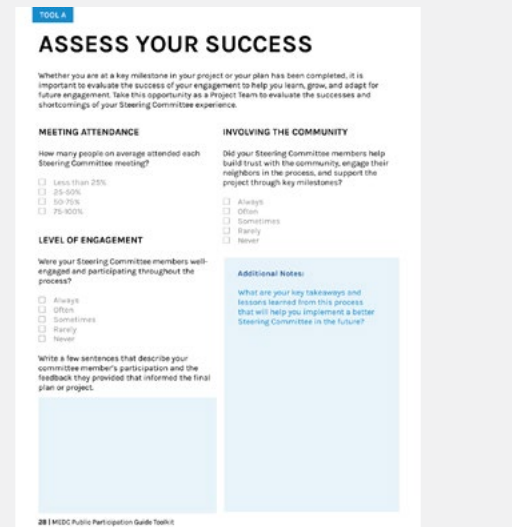
KICK-OFF THE PROCESS WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet during your Steering Committee's first meeting to help understand their goals, opportunities, potential challenges, and recruitment strategies.



ASSESS YOUR SUCCESS

Use this worksheet to track your Steering Committee's work and evaluate their success throughout the process. You can utilize this worksheet at key project milestones to hold your team accountable, and at the end of the project to evaluate overall success.





BUILD THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The first step to having a Steering Committee is deciding their roles and responsibilities, understanding who should participate to have a variety of perspectives on the team and establishing a regular cadence to meet. This worksheet is for the Project Team to use when establishing a Steering Committee.

GOALS

What is the goal for the Steering Committee (see the goals guide in *Section 2. Get Yourself Started*)?

- Inform
- Listen
- Involve
- Collaborate

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Based on your project team's goals and intended outcomes for your process, write a few sentences that describe the role of the Steering Committee members. What are their expectations for participation? Will they be advising on the process, recruiting broad community participation in larger engagement events, passing out flyers door to door, reviewing final project deliverables, etc.?

REPRESENTATION AND RECRUITMENT

First, identify how many people you believe you will need to have a successful Steering Committee (typically somewhere between 5 and 20 people). After you have identified a target number of committee members, list the organizations, demographic groups, local leaders, etc. that would give you diverse representation. The more specific, the better. Write down exact names and contact information if you have it.



Not sure where to start?

Unless the project has a very specific audience, try for a variety of perspectives at the table. Consider getting someone from....

- The Region (county, neighboring townships, etc)
- The Chamber of Commerce
- Small Business Owner
- Large Business Owner
- Local Developer
- Artist or Historian
- Block Club Leaders
- Non-Profit Organizations
- School Administrators or Students
- City Staff
- Elected Officials
- Representative from the Planning Commission, and/or Legislative Body

TIMING AND SCHEDULE

Based on your project schedule and targeted milestones, how many meetings should you have to effectively engage and empower your committee members as co-authors in this process?

When would most people be available to meet?

- Mornings (8 or 8:30 am start times)
- Lunch (noon to 1pm)
- Early Evenings (4 or 5pm start times)
- Late Evenings (6 or 7pm start times)

What format works best for the project team? Confirm this will also work with your Steering Committee in their first kick-off meeting.

- Virtual
- Hybrid
- In-Person

If you choose to have in-person or hybrid meetings, what are a few potential locations where you could host your Steering Committee meetings?



AGREEMENTS

Once you've recruited members of the team, craft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines the following:

- Job description
- Schedule and timeline
- Time commitment expected

TIPS AND TRICKS

People learn in different ways.

- Send short agendas ahead of meetings for those who like to mentally prepare.
- Send copies of meeting materials after the meeting for those who like to reflect before providing feedback.
- Be sure to give them a deadline to get you feedback.

Learn from your committee members.

- You chose your committee members for a reason. Ask them to share out about specific topics, programs, or specialties so you can learn from their expert knowledge.
- Ask for specific feedback.
- If you notice some members are more quiet, go around the room so everyone has a chance to speak.





KICK-OFF THE PROCESS

Thank you for joining our Steering Committee! We are so excited to have your participation to make this process as meaningful and empowering to the community as possible. We have a few questions we would like to review together to make sure we all have established share goals, opportunities for success, any concerns or challenges you have about the process, and learn how we can better connect with your network.

Let's talk logistics.

What are your preferred meeting times?

- Mornings (8 or 8:30 am start times)
- Lunch (noon to 1pm)
- Early Evenings (4 or 5pm start times)
- Late Evenings (6 or 7pm start times)

What format works best for you?

- Virtual
- Hybrid
- In-Person

We would like to end each meeting with a short 5-10 minute share out from a committee member to learn more about what their organization does in the community or about something your organization does to lead our community. What topic would you like to share out about?

If you could add **one rule** for our Steering Committee so we can use our time efficiently, effectively, and respectfully, what would it be?

We will be **successful** at the end of this project/process if...



What are our **opportunities** for success?



What **challenges or concerns** do you think this project will need to tackle?

This can include challenges around building trust with the community, concerns around support and participation, etc.



Who can you reach through **your network** that you would like to see involved in this process? Feel free to list both people and organizations.

Have you noticed any tools are most effective to reach out community members?

Are there any meeting locations you recommend or upcoming community events we should know of?

ASSESS YOUR SUCCESS

Whether you are at a key milestone in your project or your plan has been completed, it is important to evaluate the success of your engagement to help you learn, grow, and adapt for future engagement. Take this opportunity as a Project Team to evaluate the successes and shortcomings of your Steering Committee experience. Fill this out after each meeting or the end of the process.

MEETING ATTENDANCE

How many people on average attended each Steering Committee meeting?

- Less than 25%
- 25-50%
- 50-75%
- 75-100%

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Were your Steering Committee members well-engaged and participating throughout the process?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY

Did your Steering Committee members help build trust with the community, engage their neighbors in the process, and support the project through key milestones?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

WHAT WAS ASKED

Write a few sentences describing what you hoped to learn and what you asked participants.

WHAT WAS LEARNED

Write a few sentences listing the key takeaways from the community feedback and where to find full results.

USING COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Write a few sentences describing how that feedback will impact the project.

What lessons learned will help implement a better Steering Committee in the future?